

Home Fire Protection Checklist

Protecting your home from fire involves a multi-faceted approach, encompassing both the immediate structure and the surrounding landscape. This checklist provides key measures to enhance your home's fire resilience.

I. Landscape Protection (Defensible Space)

Creating a "defensible space" around your home significantly reduces the risk of wildfire spread.

Zone 0: Immediate Zone (0-5 feet from the house)

- ☐ **Remove All Combustibles:** Clear all combustible materials (mulch, plants, leaves, firewood, patio furniture cushions, storage sheds, trash cans) from within 5 feet of the house, decks, and attached structures.
- ☐ **Hardscaped Areas:** Consider replacing flammable landscaping with non-combustible materials like gravel, concrete, or pavers.
- ☐ **Clear Gutters and Roof:** Regularly clean gutters, eaves, and the roof surface of leaves, pine needles, and other debris.
- ☐ **Keep Plants Trimmed:** Ensure any remaining plants in this zone are low-growing, well-irrigated, and free of dead material.

Zone 1: Lean, Clean, and Green Zone (5-30 feet from the house)

- ☐ **Tree Spacing:**
 - ☐ Maintain horizontal spacing between trees and shrubs, especially on sloped land.
 - ☐ Maintain vertical spacing between ground vegetation, shrubs, and the lowest branches of trees (clearance of at least 3 times the height of the shrub).
- ☐ **Remove Dead Vegetation:** Regularly remove dead or dying trees, shrubs, grasses, and leaves.
- ☐ **Prune Trees:** Trim tree branches to a height of 6-10 feet from the ground (or one-third of the tree's total height, whichever is less).
- ☐ **Mow Grass:** Keep grasses and weeds mowed to a maximum of 4 inches.

- ☐ **Relocate Firewood:** Store firewood and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from the house.
- ☐ **Outdoor Furniture:** Store outdoor furniture cushions indoors or in fire-resistant containers when not in use during high fire danger.

Zone 2: Reduced Fuel Zone (30-100 feet from the house, or to property line)

- ☐ **Thin Vegetation:** Reduce the density of trees and shrubs to slow the spread of fire.
- ☐ **Increase Spacing:** Create increased spacing between plants and groups of plants.
- ☐ **Remove Ladder Fuels:** Eliminate small trees and shrubs that could act as "ladder fuels" carrying fire from the ground to the tree canopy.
- ☐ **Mow Grasses:** Continue to mow grasses and weeds.

II. House Protection (Hardening Your Home)

Making your home more resistant to embers and flames is crucial for survival.

Roof and Vents

- ☐ **Fire-Resistant Roofing:** Install a Class A fire-rated roof (e.g., asphalt shingles, metal, tile).
- ☐ **Cover Vents:** Cover all exterior vents (attic, foundation, gable) with 1/8-inch metal mesh to prevent embers from entering.
- ☐ **Eaves and Soffits:** Enclose open eaves and soffits.

Walls and Windows

- ☐ **Fire-Resistant Siding:** Use fire-resistant exterior siding materials (e.g., stucco, fiber cement, non-combustible stone or brick).
- ☐ **Double-Pane Windows:** Install multi-pane, tempered glass windows to resist breakage from heat.
- ☐ **Window Screens:** Ensure screens are present on all operable windows to prevent embers from blowing in if glass breaks.

Decks and Porches

- ☐ **Fire-Resistant Decking:** Use fire-resistant decking materials (e.g., ignition-resistant lumber, composite materials rated for fire resistance).
- ☐ **Enclose Undersides:** Enclose the undersides of decks and elevated portions of homes with fire-resistant materials.
- ☐ **Clear Under Deck:** Keep the area under decks and porches clear of all combustible materials.

Other Structures and Features

- ☐ **Chimney:** Ensure your chimney is clean and has a spark arrestor.
- ☐ **Propane Tanks:** Secure propane tanks and ensure they are at least 10 feet from structures and surrounded by clear defensible space.
- ☐ **Fencing:** Consider replacing the first 5-10 feet of fencing attached to your home with non-combustible materials.
- ☐ **Address Visibility:** Ensure your house number is clearly visible from the street for emergency responders.
- ☐ **Water Sources:** Maintain easily accessible water sources, such as a garden hose that can reach all parts of your property, with a nozzle capable of a strong stream.

III. Emergency Planning & Maintenance

- ☐ **Emergency Kit:** Assemble an emergency kit with essentials like water, non-perishable food, first aid, medications, and important documents.
- ☐ **Evacuation Plan:** Develop and practice an evacuation plan with all household members, including designated meeting points.
- ☐ **Stay Informed:** Sign up for local emergency alerts and monitor fire weather conditions.
- ☐ **Regular Maintenance:** Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of all fire protection measures, especially before fire season.
- ☐ **Smoke Alarms:** Install and regularly test smoke alarms on every level of your home and inside and outside sleeping areas. Change batteries annually.
- ☐ **Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** Install carbon monoxide detectors, especially if you have fuel-burning appliances.

- [] **Fire Extinguishers:** Keep working fire extinguishers (ABC type) readily available and know how to use them. Inspect them regularly.
- [] **Review Insurance:** Ensure your homeowner's insurance policy is up-to-date and covers wildfire damage.